

Tribal Group
1-4 Portland
Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR
T 0845 123 6001
F 0845 123 6002

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Protect inspection



13 November 2008

Mr Ian Cox
The Headteacher
Kingsbrook School
Stratford Road
Deanshanger
Milton Keynes
Northamptonshire
MK19 6HN

Dear Mr Cox

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 November 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, the chair of governors and representatives of the local authority for the time they gave.

Since the last inspection there have been several new appointments to leadership posts at both senior and middle levels. The headteacher resigned at the end of August 2008 and was replaced with an interim headteacher from the end of September.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on 26 and 27 March 2008, the school was asked to improve the progress made by all students, but in particular boys, through effective support for all those who are falling behind; improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that more is of a good or better quality and that it leads to enhanced attitudes to learning by students; and, ensure that statutory requirements over the safeguarding of students are fully complied with.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Standards fell in 2008 and unvalidated results in the 2008 national tests indicate performance was below expectations for all key stages. GCSE results were well

below the school's targets with 35% of students gaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics, a fall of 10% since 2007. In contrast, there were improvements in science. The achievement of boys remains well below that of girls, but the small group of boys with the lowest levels of prior attainment exceeded expectations. The school is only just beginning to gather secure data regarding student progress, but analysis undertaken of current progress indicates that recent initiatives are not yet having a sufficiently positive impact on overall achievement. At Key Stage 3 there was little change in the percentage of students reaching the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. In all three subjects the school missed its targets. However, in mathematics the gap was narrower and more students reached the higher levels. In the lower school, English is a particular cause for concern. The school's analysis of A level results for 2008 shows that students' attainment was lower than the previous year. This represents satisfactory achievement in the sixth form, whereas it had previously been good.

There have been significant changes to the management structure of the school this term and these are starting to have a positive impact in several aspects of the school's work. This is evident in the improved progress being made by those students who are identified as being in danger of falling behind. The leaders of subjects are clearer about their roles and responsibilities and the new systems for collecting data on student progress are enabling them to target intervention and support more accurately. The school is now working hard to ensure the judgements teachers make about the levels at which students are working are thoroughly moderated and as accurate as possible.

Although many leaders are relatively inexperienced, the school now has a sharper understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the quality of teaching. There are still some inadequate lessons and not enough good or better teaching to close the gaps in achievement. However, the strategies that have been put in place and the support the school has been receiving from external consultants have had a positive impact on some aspects of teaching. Lessons are generally well planned and identify appropriate learning outcomes for different levels of ability. These plans are implemented accurately and the good relationships that exist in most classrooms mean that student disruptions and disengagement are declining.

Teachers use a range of questions to develop students' understanding, but often give too little time for reflection or for students to talk at more length about their answers. The more able students are challenged with extension tasks, but are not given regular opportunities during the main part of the lesson to work at a more challenging level. Moreover, in the less successful lessons, teachers do not systematically check the levels of students' understanding as the lesson proceeds. Many teachers are choosing topics that will interest and engage the students, particularly the boys, and the students told me that disruptions are fewer and the work more interesting in many subjects. However, this is still too variable across the school. Many teachers are making good use of modern technology to support the students' learning and displays in classrooms are also used well to this end. In other lessons where this is not the case, teachers often have to spend too long explaining

what they want the students to do. As a result, some students lose interest and fail to make sufficient progress. Work in the students' books is often marked with helpful comments on how to improve, but this is not always the case. In some books unfinished work is left unchallenged. Students have targets for the end of their key stage, but they told me that they do not always have sufficient input into the setting of those targets or clearly understand whether they are making sufficient progress towards them at present. There are secure plans in place to deal with this, including providing more information for parents on the progress their children are making.

Behaviour has improved this term and students say they feel safe and that when bullying occasionally occurs it is dealt with quickly and effectively. The atmosphere around the school is orderly but the behaviour policy is not consistently applied, resulting in continued low-level disruption by a few students in lessons.

There is little evidence of the positive impact of the school's specialist status at present. The students are not meeting their targets in the specialist subjects and the focus on enterprise is not particularly evident or helping to raise achievement in other subject areas.

Governors now receive the information they need to successfully support and challenge the school. All statutory safeguarding requirements are fully met. The local authority is providing good support for the school both in financial terms and through targeted support and challenge from school improvement advisers and consultants. The local authority is working with the governing body to ensure a suitable permanent headteacher is appointed from September 2009.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector